

IN MEMORIAM

Written by Becky Harding, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Tuesday, 20 July 2010 05:53 - Last Updated Tuesday, 20 July 2010 06:38



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mark I. Payne, Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) on July 17. Mark has been a respected and admired leader in Utah's mental health community and his name is well-known among mental health leaders across the country.

Mark had an unusually strong work ethic and commitment to serving others. He started out at age 18 as a psych tech, working on the geriatric unit at Utah State Hospital (USH). He went on to become a social worker, still at USH, and eventually the Adult Administrative Director. In 1993, he took over as USH Superintendent. While this position traditionally turns over every two years, Mark stayed for 12 years, until being actively recruited in 2005 to fill the position as Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. His rise from the most humble position at the Utah State Hospital to that of the Director of the Utah State Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health is unprecedented and is testament to his character, determination and leadership.

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In the words of Dallas Earnshaw, who succeeded Mark at USH: "Mark was a great friend and touched the lives of literally hundreds of people over the years. He loved the hospital and dedicated his life to the patients and staff. He was passionate about our success and was always a great support. His leadership paved the way for much progress and made the hospital a great place. Not only has he had a great impact on patient care and the progress of the hospital, his influence has reached throughout the mental health system in Utah and nationally."

Mark used his exceptional leadership skills to make a difference in the lives of the people he serves, the agencies he oversees, and the employees of his division. He had an uncommon ability to look for common ground among competing interests. The State's current budget crisis created the potential for a huge battle between DSAMH and the local authorities. Mark's commitment to collaboration changed the Division's dealings with the counties from an adversarial relationship to a partnership. With his win/win style of leadership, he was able to garner cooperation and support rather than use mandates.

Although he had struggled with significant health problems for many years, that did not deter him from giving his all to the work. His determination to make a difference in the lives of the people he cared about prohibited him from ever giving up.

Mark's passing is a tremendous loss to all of us—his staff, colleagues, the consumers, and especially his family. His legacy of service and dedication to his family, his church, and to the State of Utah will be remembered for a very long time.

Mark leaves behind his wife, Connie, three children and four grandchildren.

More Thoughts

On behalf of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), I am deep

He always had a deep passion for improving the lives of people with mental illness and their families in U

Mark's caring for people was always forefront whenever discussing policies, services, and systems. He

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Again, I am so sorry for your loss. Mark was a great and inspiring leader and will be deeply missed.

Robert W. Glover, Ph.D.
Executive Director
NASMHPD

It is with great sadness that I inform you that we lost a great friend of WPSHA over the weekend. Mark I

Cory Nelson
WPSHA President